

CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network; and

the server having a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user extracts and analyzes the inventory information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user extracts and analyzes the customer information from the server, and

via the reporting feature, wherein the user generates reports using the analysis of the inventory information and the customer information for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

2. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

wherein one or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the plurality of self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information; and

the server having a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the rental transaction feature, wherein the user creates a rental agreement using the inventory information and the customer information, and wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

3. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units;
a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and
an automatic payment feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture, the automatic payment feature having a credit card information capture to receive information regarding a credit card to be charged, wherein the automatic payment feature periodically applies rental charges to the credit card.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers;

a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture; and

a rate setting feature in communication with the inventory information capture, wherein the rate setting feature communicates a rental rate to the inventory information capture.

6. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an authorized access identifier.

7. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an emergency contact identifier.

8. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a payment history.

9. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a credit card identifier.

10. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the plurality of storage units comprises a first storage unit and a second storage unit, an automatic payment feature applied to the first storage unit, and an invoicing feature applied to the second storage unit.

11. (Previously presented) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 comprising a transfer feature that transfers a customer from an occupied self-storage unit to a vacant self-storage unit.

12. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 11 comprising a fee calculator that calculates a prorated rent for the occupied room and a prorated rent for the vacant room.

13. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the user generates reporting feature ~~includes~~ an audit report via the reporting feature.

14. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the user generates reporting feature ~~includes~~ a cash intake report via the reporting feature.

15. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the user generates reporting feature ~~comprises~~ data configured to be exported to an external financial database via the reporting feature.

16. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the inventory information capture comprises a map.

17. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the user generates reporting feature ~~comprises~~ a receipt for self-storage transactions.

18. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the user generates reporting feature ~~comprises~~ a vacancy report via the reporting feature.

19. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein via the reporting feature the user generates reporting feature comprises a facility utilization report including facility revenue and occupancy information for evaluating the effect of a rental rate change on facility revenue.

20. (Currently amended) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein further comprising a communication feature configured to allow communication between users is facilitated via a communication feature.

21. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 further comprising a letter generation feature.

22. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 21 wherein upon occurrence of a predetermined criteria, the system generates a customer letter.

23. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an overdue fee.

24. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to a rate increase.

25. (Original) The automated self-storage system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an eviction.

26. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture.

27. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction.

28. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

29. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture, wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction and a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

30. (Previously presented) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the inventory information into the room inventory database via the computer-terminal and an inventory information capture and the user accesses the inventory information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the user inputs the customer information into the server via the computer-terminal and a customer information capture and the user accesses the customer information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server having a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the

computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the rental transaction feature, the user creates a rental agreement using the inventory information and the customer information, wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units, and

the server having a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server,

via the reporting feature, wherein the user extracts and analyzes the inventory information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes the customer information from the server and generates reports using the analysis of the inventory information and the customer information for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.